



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



March 14, 2007

HB 7007 An Act Concerning Renaming the Department of Mental Retardation.

Good morning Sen. Handley, Rep. Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee.

The CT Council on Developmental Disabilities encourages your support for HB 7007 An Act Concerning Renaming the Department of Mental Retardation as the Department of Developmental Services.

My name is Angela Spino, I am a Disability Policy Specialist for the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities as well as a parent whose child receives services from what is currently known as the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR).

The CT Council on Developmental Disabilities, and I as a parent, believe that the time is long overdue for Connecticut to join most of the rest of the states and remove the term mental retardation from state statutes. The word "retardation" is offensive to many people in Connecticut, and we, as a state, have no business using a word that is hurtful to our fellow citizens, let alone using it in an official capacity.

At the same time, our position on this issue is one of frustration. A name change will not change the Department's mission. Our frustration is that so much time and energy has been spent simply on changing a name when so many of Connecticut's citizens with developmental, and other, disabilities who do not fit the criteria to receive services from the Department, go without services and supports.

Today, the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities asks you to do what we must do, that is, change the Department's name to the Department of Developmental Services. This change eliminates the term mental retardation and puts the emphasis on services rather than disability label. Equally as important, this name change also simultaneously reflects the current service mission of the Department and enables future expansion of services and supports based on behavioral and developmental criteria rather than disability label. This last point is very important, because tomorrow we will ask you to change the Department's mission, for we will not live up to our obligation as a society until every Connecticut citizen with developmental disabilities has the opportunity to receive services and supports.

Thank you.

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